

And I can tell you, I'm sitting here—I've got just a few days left, and I'm trying to go over all these request for clemency, and it's almost impossible to deal with them all in a fair way, to give due concern to the attention of law enforcement as well as the people who are pleading their case. And I just don't see what that's got to do with this.

It seems to me—we changed the law in Arkansas 24 years ago—if you finish your sentence, you go sign up to vote; nobody has to get a pardon anymore. But I dare say, most people in Arkansas don't know that, because in most States they haven't done it, and we haven't done it at the national level.

These are just things I want you to think about, because I think the cities have got to continue to be the focus of building one America. And we've got to try to figure out how we're going to deal with the outstanding issues we've got.

Let me just mention, finally, that I am very grateful for the environmental support I've had from the mayors and the funding that we got last time, for the first time in history, under this lands legacy initiative, to have a permanent source of funding to set aside precious lands. And I just want to reemphasize to all of you, it is not just to protect the watershed around the Grand Canyon; it may be to protect the little square block park in some neighborhood, where that's the only green space your kids will ever see.

So I urge you, as I leave office, to make full use of this legislation that was passed last year to provide a permanent funding stream, to help you set aside green spaces in your communities. And understand, it is not just about the big open spaces or the big places or some big project, like the Everglades; it's about what's in your neighborhoods. We want this bill, this whole bill. The whole idea of this was to balance our concern for the big chunks of land and

resources that had to be preserved and the need to provide some environmental balance and access to nature to all of our kids and families in urban America, as well. So I urge you, when you work in this coming year, to make sure that your cities are a part of that initiative.

Well, I've already said more than I meant to. I thank you for the award. I thank you for the work we've done to put this country in good shape. The 8 years passed in a flash, but I enjoyed it very much. And I particularly enjoyed working with the mayors. All of you who have welcomed me to your communities, I thank you for that. And I hope that you will do what you can to keep America on a positive track. Together we proved that good economics was good social policy, that you could be fiscally responsible and reduce poverty, that you could have an urban policy that actually helped the rest of the country, too. You did that. You should be very proud.

But I think that the biggest rewards of our efforts of the last 8 years are still out there. And if ever I can help any of you to do what's right by your people in the future, I will certainly do it. I thank you, and I feel better about my country knowing that you're staying behind to keep up the fight.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:24 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Brent Coles of Boise, ID, president, Mayor Wellington Webb of Denver, CO, past president, and J. Thomas Cochran, executive director, U.S. Conference of Mayors; Mayors Marc Morial of New Orleans, LA, and Thomas Menino of Boston, MA; and Alvin Brown, Senior Adviser to the Vice President for Urban Affairs. Prior to his remarks, the President was presented with the U.S. Conference of Mayors Distinguished Public Service Award.

## Statement on Action To Eliminate Sweatshops and Abusive Child Labor Practices

*January 16, 2001*

Today I am pleased to announce new initiatives that build on our efforts to put a more

human face on the global economy by protecting workers, children, and families from abusive and

unfair labor practices. Around the world, tens of millions of children are deprived of their childhood and subjected to the worst forms of child labor, slavery, forced or compulsory labor, prostitution, pornography, and other kinds of harmful and unsafe work. At the same time, many millions of workers toil under conditions that are deplorable and unacceptable. These antisweatshop grants and the customs advisory on forced and indentured child labor represent additional tools to help eliminate sweatshops and abusive child labor across the globe.

Over the last 8 years, we have made the U.S. a leader in the global fight to stamp out abusive labor practices and open the door to education and opportunity. I am proud that the U.S. was among the first nations to ratify the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention 182 for Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor. With the support of Senator Tom Harkin, we have increased our contributions to the ILO's International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor fifteenfold from \$3 million in 1993 to \$45 million today. We have doubled to \$10 million Customs Service resources to enforce the ban on the importation of goods made

with forced or indentured child labor. And last year, we passed a new \$37 million Department of Labor School Works program to strengthen educational systems in developing countries, targeted to areas where abusive child labor is prevalent.

I would like to make a special note that one of the antisweatshop grants being announced today is being awarded to the Fair Labor Association (FLA), a diverse coalition of manufacturers, consumer groups, labor and human rights organizations, and universities dedicated to ensuring that products purchased by American consumers were not made in sweatshops overseas. The FLA grew out of the Apparel Industry Partnership, a coalition we first brought together at the White House in 1996 to combat sweatshop labor. This pathbreaking partnership was given new energy and vitality when Chuck Ruff agreed to be its first chairman. Chuck used his unique leadership and coalition-building skills to give the FLA a successful start. While Chuck recently passed away, the significant accomplishments of the FLA under his leadership will live on as one of his many contributions to a better, fairer world.

## Statement on the Final Report of the E-Commerce Working Group *January 16, 2001*

Today I am pleased to announce the release of the final report of my administration's E-commerce Working Group, "Leadership for the New Millennium, Delivering on Digital Progress and Prosperity." During my administration, America's economy and society have been transformed by new information and communications technologies. The information technology sector has accounted for almost one-third of U.S. economic growth and has helped spark an increase in U.S. productivity and global competitiveness.

Vice President Gore and I have worked hard to help Americans make the most of these new possibilities. We created a market-led approach to E-commerce that won acceptance around the world, promoted competition in the telecommunications industry, and increased our investment in the technologies of the 21st century.

We strengthened the protection of personal information, especially sensitive medical and financial records. We helped to bridge the digital divide by ensuring that every child had the opportunity to become technologically literate. Thanks to the leadership of the Vice President, our Government is using the Internet to become more open, user-friendly, and efficient.

But we are still at the dawn of the information age, and much more remains to be done to grasp its potential. We should use technology to advance our oldest and deepest values—dramatically increasing the number of people with disabilities who can work, lifting more families out of poverty, and putting access to a world-class education and cutting-edge skills at the fingertips of every American. These are challenges that are worthy of our great Nation.